



# The King John School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115319  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279571  
**Inspection dates** 5 December 2005 to 6 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. John Godwood LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Shipwrights Drive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		SS7 1RQ
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01702558284
<b>Number on roll</b>	1828	<b>Fax number</b>	01702555636
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Brian Belcher
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss. Margaret Wilson

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5 December 2005 - 6 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279571
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The King John School is a large 11-18 comprehensive school with an above average sized sixth form. It is a specialist school for mathematics and computing. Most students come from the local area, where the level of deprivation is below average. Students from further afield are invited to take an entrance test and can form up to 15% of the intake. Overall, the students' attainment on entry is average. One in twenty students come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for whom English is not their first language is very low. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Sportsmark Gold award and awards for work experience and its international links.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's own view is that it is a good school and inspectors agree. It provides good value for money. Students achieve well and reach above average standards. Examination results in Year 9 and Year 11 are consistently above average and improved significantly in 2005. Students' performance in GCSE English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is particularly strong. Results at A level also improved in 2005 after a dip in 2004. Sixth form students' achievement is satisfactory. Students' personal development is good. The school's links and partnerships with external bodies are excellent. They significantly support students' personal development and academic achievement. The contribution that many students make to the school community is outstanding. Students' knowledge of other cultures is supported extremely well through the school's international links, but their ability to reflect on spiritual matters is underdeveloped. Students' thinking skills have been improved, but are limited in some lessons when teachers and students do not use language precisely enough. Teaching and learning are good. There is a good range of subjects and an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Students' personal and academic development are monitored well and the quality of careers guidance is very good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and provides a very clear strategic direction. Through good management processes, the school know itself extremely well and has a clear understanding of areas in need of improvement. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and the monitoring of students' progress. This has led to improved standards. The specialist status for mathematics and computing has been led very well and has had a significant impact on standards in the specialist subjects and the quality of teaching and resources throughout the school. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form is satisfactory. The school's own view is that it is good, but the school and inspectors agree that students' achievement is satisfactory. Sixth form students have a good range of subjects to choose from and are happy with their teaching and the support they receive. The quality of learning is less strong than in the main school because the school has been focusing closely on the key priorities to improve standards at GCSE. The school recognises that it needs to improve sixth form learning and achievement and is planning its strategy. The new head of sixth form has a clear understanding of what needs to be done.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve achievement in the sixth form to match that in the main school. - Provide more opportunities for students to reflect on their own values and beliefs and discuss these with others. - Develop students' thinking skills through precise use of language in lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students' attainment on entry is broadly average. They make good progress and reach above average standards in Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations. In the sixth form, standards are above average and students make satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry. Examination results in 2005 improved significantly in all key stages and exceeded the school's challenging targets. Year 9 results were above average in English, mathematics and science, although too few students reached the higher Level 6 in English. At GCSE, the proportion of students gaining five or more higher grades improved significantly to the highest yet reached by the school. Students' performance in English, mathematics and ICT is particularly strong. Science is less strong but is improving. Very few students leave school with no GCSE passes. Standards have improved in the main school as a result of the school's clear focus on improving learning and teaching and close monitoring of students' progress. The school has effectively focused on improving students' thinking skills, although in some cases these are limited when students and teachers do not use standard English precisely in lessons. Results at A level were above average in 2003 but dipped to below average in 2004. The 2005 results improved again and were on a par with those of 2003. The school analyses all its results with great care and is aware that achievement in the sixth form can be improved. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Both genders do equally well at the end of Year 9. Some boys underachieved in GCSE examinations in 2004, but this was corrected in 2005. Students with learning difficulties and gifted and talented students achieve well. The few students from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other students.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes, good attendance and punctuality. Most behave well in lessons and around school. They listen carefully, make considered responses to questions and work effectively with others. The vast majority report that they feel safe in school and are confident that they could talk to a member of staff if they had a problem. In most cases bullying is dealt with effectively, but there are occasional instances when, as the school recognises, a more rigorous approach is required. The school's ethos has a positive impact on students' personal development. Through the extensive range of activities, visits and international links, they develop a balanced view of society and a very good appreciation of cultural diversity. Students' moral and social development is good. They have outstanding opportunities to make a contribution to the school community through the year councils and their work as peer listeners, student mentors and prefects. However, their spiritual development is limited because they have too few opportunities to reflect on their own and others' values and beliefs. Students engage in a wide range of sports and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are very well prepared for their future economic

well-being through high quality work experience and careers education and good opportunities for teamwork. Sixth form students are well supported and their personal development is good. They enjoy the sixth form and contribute effectively to shaping aspects of provision. The links with the main school are underdeveloped but some students play an active part by mentoring younger students.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are good. The development of new teaching methods that encourage students to think for themselves and assess their own progress has been a major school priority and a key factor in improving standards. Most lessons have a clear purpose and are well structured to ensure that students are involved and interested and learn effectively. Teachers know their subjects well and use questions skilfully to assess students' understanding and encourage them to explain their thinking. In most lessons, behaviour is well managed and, as a result, students are attentive and work well together. Teachers have good relationships with students. In some lessons, however, students' clarity of thinking is limited because language is not used precisely enough, in some cases by teachers as well as students. The school assesses and records students' progress effectively. Procedures are rigorous and implemented consistently. Students have useful opportunities to discuss their learning with teachers and with each other. Marking is regular and encouraging, but often does not give students enough guidance on how to improve their work. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory overall, although there are many good lessons and a few that are outstanding. Students' learning is less good than in the main school because the school has focused particularly on developing lessons that will improve students' thinking and performance at GCSE. It has already planned to develop a similar focus on achievement in the sixth form and in particular to develop students' skills in learning independently.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

The school has a good curriculum. It meets most students' needs well and through the specialism in mathematics and computing is well matched to the employment needs of the local area. There is a good range of GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. There are few vocational courses, but the school plans to extend these. The sixth form offers a wide choice of A level subjects and some vocational courses. The provision for ICT has been much improved since the last inspection. All year groups have ICT lessons and students' learning is enhanced by good access to computers and other resources. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are well planned. However, the time allocated to religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form is low and

the school needs to ensure that it fulfils the locally agreed syllabus. All other statutory requirements are met. The school provides well for students' individual needs. Those with learning difficulties receive good support and in Years 10 and 11 benefit from a course in key skills that supports their other studies. Gifted and talented students are provided with well organised additional challenges, including a popular summer school. There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and drama, and participation is high. After-school courses encourage students to raise their aspirations and fulfil their potential. International links are very well developed and there are many visits and visitors.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are very good. There are good arrangements for child protection and ensuring health and safety. The links with external agencies are outstanding. Careful consideration is given to new students so that they settle easily. This includes effective liaison with primary schools. The school provides experienced counselling, medical advice from trained staff and support groups for the most vulnerable students. The new Pupils' Services Area, which is staffed by committed associate staff, has enhanced the level of daily care. High quality relationships between students and staff underpin much of the school's work. Students feel valued and respond well to the generous system of awards. Target setting is effective, and personal and academic monitoring is well developed. Good academic guidance in Years 9 and 11 enables students to make appropriate choices about the courses they follow. Sixth form students are well prepared for their career choices and applications to higher education. Students have a very strong voice in the school. The student councils meet weekly to review aspects of learning and the school environment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of leadership and management are a strength of the school. It is good overall and has aspects that are outstanding. The school is very clear about what it needs to do in order to improve because it has an accurate and comprehensive understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It is very thorough in monitoring examination results, students' progress and the quality of provision in subjects. It regularly consults students and parents. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of self-evaluation since the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She has established a professional culture in which teachers take responsibility for the progress students make and think carefully about their teaching skills and how they might improve students' achievement. The result is a purposeful shared ethos and strong teamwork. Strategic planning is of high quality. Priorities are clear and based on shared values. The school's specialism in mathematics and computing has been managed with energy and enthusiasm. It has had a positive

impact on teachers' skills and their links with other schools, as well as on the school's resources. School management is also enhanced by very effective use of ICT. The school has correctly identified that a current priority is to develop further the quality of provision in the sixth form. There is a strong emphasis on developing the skills of middle managers and staff training has a high priority. Overall, the school has staff with the depth and breadth of experience to ensure good ongoing improvement. The governing body provides good challenge and support. They know the school well and are fully involved in planning improvements. Finance is managed well with good oversight and regular audits. The school provides good value for money.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help when we visited your school on 5 and 6 December. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons and other activities. You told us that you enjoy school and feel well supported. We agree that it is a good school in which test and examination results are improving at all levels. This is a tribute to your hard work and to the good teaching you receive that enables you to understand the work well. Results are also improving because your progress is very carefully tracked and you are given good guidance on how to meet your targets. Most of you behave well and enjoy school and this helps your learning. Your attendance is good. There are many ways in which you contribute to the school, as prefects or peer listeners. You have a good range of subjects to choose from and the extra-curricular activities are outstanding, including the sport, drama and links with other countries. Becoming a specialist mathematics and computing college has brought new equipment to the school and also new ideas in teaching that have led to better learning. The school is very well led by Miss Wilson. She and the governors have a very good knowledge of how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. You are involved in that through the Student Voice. New developments are planned very well and as a result the school is improving. We have identified a few areas for further development. Although results in the sixth form are above average, the school is aware that they could be higher and is planning new ways to improve learning and teaching in the sixth form. Throughout the school, there are not enough times for you to think about your own ideas and beliefs about life and discuss them with others. Finally, we have asked the school to develop your thinking skills even further by making sure that the language used in lessons is precise. We are confident that the school will continue to improve and wish you well.